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Baker Is Wary of Riders On Any CIA Bill in 1980

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Senate Minority Leader Howard H. Baker Jr. (R-Tenn.) said yesterday that he fears any legislation affecting the CIA this year could turn into a "Christmas Tree" bill if it is brought to the Senate floor.

Baker said he favors a limited measure repealing the current law governing the CIA's covert operations, but he has not determined whether even that can be safely steered through the Senate without getting festooned with controversial amendments.

The Senate minority leader told Democratic colleagues last week that he was opposed to bringing any charter legislation for the CIA and the rest of the U. S. intelligence community up for a floor vote.

Elaborating on his position to a reporter yesterday, Baker said that, "If you put that charter on the floor this session, it will take an eternity."

He predicted that it would be bogged-down by attacks from all sides, both from senators "who think the CIA has been decimated" in recent years and from those who think the controls in the proposed charter are too weak.

Baker said he was confident that passions will be less pronounced next year, after the elections are over.

Partly as a result of the GOP leader's stand, the Senate Intelligence Committee has put aside its effort to enact even a streamlined charter. It is

concentrating instead on an oversight bill that would repeal the 1974 Hughes-Ryan amendment and confine reports about covert operations and other intelligence activities to the Senate and House Intelligence committees.

Baker said, however, that "It may be that we can't do that this year, either." He said the oversight bill also "is liable to look like a Christmas tree before we finish with it."

The Intelligence Committee yesterday was scheduled to continue marking up the oversight bill, but then postponed the meeting, apparently in an effort to get its members to refrain from adding riders before the measure gets to the floor.

Sen. John H. Chafee (R-R.I.) has been seeking to add an amendment making it a crime to disclose the names of CIA operatives working abroad. Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.) has served notice that he wants to prohibit the use of American journalists, clergy and academics as secret intelligence agents.

Baker said senators from both parties had come to him to express their reservations about a floor fight. There have been reports that Republican presidential candidate Ronald Reagan also wanted a delay until next year, when Reagan might be in the White House. Baker, however, said neither Reagan nor anyone in his campaign had spoken to him about the matter.